

CHRISTIANS AND HOLLYWOOD MOVIES

Reprinted December 19, 2006 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

Hollywood has a very powerful influence in the average Bible-believing church in North America. Fundamental Baptist churches used to preach against unwholesome Hollywood movies, but that was before the movies were brought right into the homes via video recordings. The introduction of the VCR has brought a corresponding deterioration in the spiritual zeal of the average church.

As Hollywood has descended farther and farther into a moral cesspool, Christians have allowed themselves to become desensitized to sin. This can be illustrated by the movie rating system. The G rating is supposed to be for movies that are proper for general family viewing. The PG rating means parental guidance is suggested. PG-13 means children under the age of 13 are not allowed to watch it in theatres. The R and NC-17 ratings mean the movie is restricted to adults. (In reality, there is little or no restriction today because the movies can be rented and brought right into the home.)

We must recognize that these ratings are assigned by unregenerate men in the world, and they are not based on the absolute standards of the Bible but upon the shifting sand of this world's ever-changing relativistic moral philosophy. Thus, today's PG movies would have been PG-13 only a few years ago. Today's R-rated movies would have been X-rated a few years ago. Just 20 years ago most Bible-believing Christians would not have allowed today's PG movies into their homes, not to speak of PG-13, R-, or NC-17 movies. But as the movie industry has gotten viler, many Christians have been like the frog. If you drop a frog into a pot of boiling hot water he would immediately try to jump out, but if you put the frog in the pot and gradually increase the heat, you can eventually boil him because he does not recognize what is happening to him. This is what has happened to the average Christian in today's wicked society.

I know for a fact that many Christians, even leaders, in fundamental Baptist churches are watching PG-13 and R-rated movies these days. I have seen such videos in homes that I have visited, and at various times men in churches have recommended such movies to me.

USA Today last November ran an article titled "PG-13 can lull folks with false security." It is a warning about the filthiness of PG-13 movies by a secular newspaper! The article contains the following important statement:

"PG-13 WAS DESIGNED, I BELIEVE, TO APPLY THE FRIENDLY PG SYMBOL TO MOVIES THAT HAVE NO BUSINESS EVEN BEING CONSIDERED FOR VIEWING BY MOST YOUNG TEENAGERS AND PRETEENS. The age of assignment for the rating is DECEPTIVE, and IT LULLS PARENTS INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY" (Joe Zanger, editor of *PG-14*, *USA Today*, Nov. 22, 1999, p. 2D).

This is an important warning, though it should be even stronger. The article also notes that there is often no difference between PG-13 and R-rated movies, and even when there is a difference, it is only minor. Both types of movies routinely contain nudity, immorality, gratuitous and graphic violence, and foul language. From the standpoint of a Christian who wants to obey the Lord's call to holiness, there

is no real difference. Immodesty is immodesty. Cursing is cursing. Blasphemy is blasphemy. Extramarital sex is extramarital sex. If one movie contains a little less of these things than another movie, that does not make either movie acceptable before God.

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me” (Psalm 101:3).

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

As we have already noted, the ratings have become more lenient with the passing of time. Movies that would have been rated R a few years ago are routinely rated PG-13 today. Further, the category of NC-17 (meaning no one under 17 may be admitted) has been added to replace the old filthy X rating. There is an agenda to put increasingly more godless content into increasingly more widely distributed movies.

Also mentioned in the *USA Today* article is the fact that some directors and producers actually want their movies to be rated PG-13 today, as opposed to an R rating or a PG rating. This is because young people are admitted to the PG-13 movies in the theaters as opposed to the R or restricted movies and they consider them more desirable and grownup than PG-rated movies. PG-13 movies are raking in huge receipts at the box office. Of the top 21 films that had grossed more than \$200 million at the end of 1999, the vast majority (13) were PG-13, while only three were PG, two were G, and three were R.

If secular people can see the danger of PG-13 movies, why can't God's people? We must understand that the Hollywood-New York entertainment business is not now and never has been the friend of God and righteousness. From their inception, motion pictures and television have pushed the boundaries of morality in society farther from the standard of God's Word. YET MORE MEMBERS OF BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCHES WATCH UNWHOLESOME TELEVISION AND MOVIES TODAY THAN EVER, AND THERE IS LESS PLAIN PREACHING ON THIS MATTER TODAY THAN EVER.

We must remember that the movie and television ratings systems were not devised by godly people who are committed to biblical holiness, but by secular people who are controlled by the philosophy of this world. In reality, ungodly movies are not wholesome fare for children, young people, OR for adults. PG-13 things such as nudity and foul language are not acceptable before God for adults any more than for young people.

A missionary friend was eating a meal with a pastor and his wife a couple of years ago when the topic of the movie *Titanic* (rated PG-13) came up. When the missionary expressed his opinion that the movie is ungodly, the pastor's wife said that they had seen it and had enjoyed it. The missionary asked what they thought of the nudity and adultery in the movie, and the pastor's wife said it was “tastefully done.” This illustrates how worldly many fundamental Baptist churches have become. If pastors and their wives are enjoying movies featuring immoral affairs, what are the other members of the church watching! The Bible says the pastor is to be the example to the flock (1 Peter 5:3). Woe unto those multitudes of worldly pastors who fill the pulpits across the land today, who are comfortable with Hollywood's cesspool and who do not teach their people the fear of God and separation from the

world. They call themselves pastors, which means shepherds, but they let the sheep “do their own thing” and do not protect them from danger.

“I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. BUT IF THEY HAD STOOD IN MY COUNSEL, AND HAD CAUSED MY PEOPLE TO HEAR MY WORDS, THEN THEY SHOULD HAVE TURNED THEM FROM THEIR EVIL WAY, AND FROM THE EVIL OF THEIR DOINGS” (Jeremiah 23:21,22).

The following are typical quotations from reviews of PG-13 movies by Vice & Hicks, professional movie critics:

28 DAYS -- PG-13 “profanity, sex, substance abuse”

AIRHEADS -- PG-13 “considerable raunchiness; there is violence, graphic sex, profanity and vulgarity”

BIG KAHUNA -- PG-13 “rated R for frequent use of strong profanity and crude slang, some off-color discussions”

BIRD ON A WIRE -- PG-13 “considerable mayhem, as well as sex, profanity and some nudity”

BLAME IT ON THE BELLBOY -- PG-13 “sadistic, graphic violence, as well as sex, profanity, vulgarity and some partial nudity”

BOWFINGER -- PG-13 “violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, racial epithets”

BROKEDOWN PALACE -- PG-13 “profanity, a violent beating, simulated drug use (marijuana), use of crude slang terms and vulgar gestures and brief female nudity”

CENTER STAGE -- PG-13 “rated PG-13 for occasional use of strong language (including the so-called ‘R-rated’ curse word), lewd dancing and some crude talk, as well as some particularly revealing ballet outfits”

A CHEF IN LOVE -- PG-13 “violence, rape, sex, nudity, profanity -- it’s pretty raunchy”

CLUELESS -- PG-13 “violence, vulgarity, profanity and drugs ... the film’s cavalier suggestions that casual sex is perfectly acceptable for 15-year-olds and that smoking marijuana is fine as long as it's at a party are extremely irresponsible.”

COOL WORLD -- PG-13 “With its excessive violence, sex, vulgarity and profanity, this isn't a film I'd recommend to any children — even those over 13.”

DROWNING MONA -- PG-13 “rated PG-13 for profanity (including the so-called ‘R-rated’ curse word), violence, some crude sexual humor and brief sexual fumbblings”

I DREAMED OF AFRICA -- PG-13 “violence, gore, partial male and female nudity, as well as some nude artwork, a pair of profanities and a brief sex scene”

KEEPING THE FAITH -- PG-13 “violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, nudity, sex, racial epithets”

LOVE AND BASKETBALL -- PG-13 “violence, profanity, brief partial nudity”

MADE IN AMERICA -- PG-13 “a sex scene with nudity, as well as some profanity and vulgarity”

MICKY BLUE EYES -- PG-13 “profane language, violence, nude female artwork, some blasphemous artwork and sexual humor”

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2 -- PG-13 “violence, brief gore, profanity, vulgarity”

MOLL FLANDERS -- PG-13 “Much sexual material; there is also violence, nudity, drug abuse, a couple of profanities and some vulgarity”

NEXT BEST THING -- PG-13 “sexually suggestive conversation, profanity (including use of the so-called ‘R-rated’ curse word), partial female nudity, as well as glimpses of nude photos”

PARENTHOOD -- PG-13 sex, “profanity, vulgarity, raunchy ... Some of the material is so adult that an R rating doesn’t seem unreasonable”

READY TO RUMBLE -- PG-13 “violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, brief nudity, brief sex, racial epithets”

RESCUE ME -- “is rated PG-13 but has an awful lot of R-rated material, including violence, profanity, sex and nudity”

THE SIXTH SENSE -- PG-13 “violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, partial nudity”

THE SKULLS -- PG-13 “violence, profanity, vulgarity, nudity”

SO I MARRIED AN AX MURDERER -- PG-13 “violence, sex, nudity, profanity and vulgar sexual remarks”

SON-IN-LAW -- PG-13 “profanity, vulgarity, nudity, violence, general rauchiness, lesbian kiss between two girls, mud-wrestling ... running theme of teen sex being perfectly acceptable”

WHERE THE MONEY IS -- PG-13 “violence, gore, profanity, vulgarity, nudity, sex, racial epithets”

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